

PROVIDER PROFILES

RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY CARE

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About the Agency

Over the years, Riverside has grown and adapted – first focusing on providing an array of integrated services in the Boston area, MetroWest, Southbridge and the Blackstone Valley. Today, Riverside serves more than 40,000 children, adolescents and adults in eastern and central Massachusetts, with some services spanning the state. Services are funded by government, insurers and/or private industry. Riverside also has a growing national and international presence, offering online screening tools, learning management systems, and consultation with schools, government and industry.

Riverside is proud of its track record in hiring and retaining employees. The organization utilizes an agreement with staff and people served called the Mutual Respect and Responsibility Policy. This document helps ensure everyone is treated with dignity and has clear expectations in the workplace.

Behavioral Health Services for adults include emergency and outpatient services, Adult Community Clinical Services, Clubhouses, day treatment, care coordination, and employment services. I/DD and Brain Injury Services include Shared Living, Family Support, Behavioral Treatment Services, residential services, and advocacy. Child and Family services include emergency and outpatient services, in-home therapy, schools, day programs, after school programming, early intervention, care coordination services, school-based programs and domestic violence services.

Growing to meet the community's needs

Over decades, Riverside has increased its scope of services through mergers, contracts, as well as new service models. The mergers with the Guidance Center and Somerville Mental Health, for example, provided a broad footprint in Cambridge and Somerville that has allowed Riverside to continue to grow in these communities. A new day program for youth is slated to open in Somerville soon.

Other new contracts include the development of eight I/DD and acquired brain injury (ABI) homes over the past few years with more opening over the next year.

At the same time, Riverside has expanded its **Behavioral Treatment Services** so that many other organizations benefit from skilled, behaviorally trained clinicians. Riverside clinicians also work in some DDS site offices – helping to guide services for this population. Other contracts include the Behavioral Health Community Partners Program that Riverside manages with five other partner health and behavioral health organizations.

Riverside's **Trauma Center** is where communities, schools and workplaces turn when faced with the emotional aftermath of a tragic event, such as a teen suicide, mass violence or natural disaster, and when working to prevent such tragedies from happening in the future. The Trauma Center also coordinates the statewide trauma response network.

Last year, Riverside merged with Screening for Mental Health and, through the newly rebranded MindWise Innovations, to provide screening tools and education that reach far beyond Riverside's core service area. The Signs of Suicide program teaches students how to identify signs of suicide in themselves and their peers and can be implemented in one classroom period. It has shown a reduc-



Bryan Kohl and Lisa Desai, Psy.D. (left), of Riverside's MindWise Innovations, visit Turner Construction Company. Turner has partnered with MindWise to improve employee behavioral health.

tion in self-reported suicide attempts by up to 64 percent and reached 1.5 million youth last year. MindWise also provided nearly 500,000 online behavioral health screenings in a wide variety of environments ranging from Congress to entire states, to large and mid-size corporations. The technology has reached Australia, Canada, Europe and Japan.

Riverside's **Employment Collaboratives** serve most of the Commonwealth. They were formed to increase employment of people living with any disability. The Collaboratives are a unique partnership of state agencies, employers and human service agencies working together to find and match jobs. In 2019 alone, more than 700 individuals with I/DD, physical disabilities or mental health conditions found employment through the Employment Collaboratives. The Collaboratives have also developed a training program with CVS Health in order to help people learn transferable job skills. More than 150 people have graduated from this valuable program.

President and CEO

When Scott M. Bock began what is now Riverside Community Care in 1982, he was one of six people working in a church basement with a single day program for adults with mental illness. By 1990, following several mergers and new contracts, the name Riverside was established. The remarkable growth of the organization – now numbering over 1,700 employees – is a welcome surprise to Bock, who got his start in direct care working with children who were medically fragile and then adolescents with developmental disabilities and autism spectrum disorder.



Scott M. Bock

A self-described hippy in a suit, Bock formally trained as a family therapist and came to the role of President/CEO out of frustration with the organizations he worked for. "I wanted to work in an organization that treated staff and the people served with respect. If I had to figure out how to do it, I would."

Bock is proud of the innovation that has emerged from Riverside including Employment Collaboratives, the Riverside Trauma Center, MindWise Innovations and the Behavioral Treatment Services.

Bock has served on many boards and currently sits on the Association for Behavioral Healthcare board. He has consulted to many organizations around the country – mostly on mergers. Bock also regularly writes for magazines in eight countries on music and music culture.

SALUTING THE CARING FORCE

Mackinnon is the resident problem-solver

At Louison House, Dickilyn Mackinnon just does it: from filling in when short-staffed to collecting and organizing donations to her actual job as Outreach and Prevention Specialist.

Mackinnon has worked at **Louison House** since 2013 as a Representative-Payee, returning to the organization where she had worked in 2008-09. In early 2017, her duties were expanded to include outreach and supportive case management to people residing in the agency's permanent supportive housing (PSH), and as needed with former or current residents and others who need specialized help, especially with budgeting or interactions with Social Security.

"I am fortunate to be able to help people recognize their emotional strengths and give them support for their life struggles and barriers that they may feel get in their way of succeeding," she said.

She works as a Representative Payee for social security recipients to help them budget and ensure that all necessary expenses are paid. As Prevention Specialist, she assists residents of the PSH units on a service plan to help them to maintain their housing. With all her clients, Mackinnon supports them in dealing with financial difficulties if they arise,



Dickilyn Mackinnon does it all for residents and staff at Louison House.

and to overcome any barriers they may have to successful housing.

"She is much more than her job title states," said Executive Director Kathy Keeser. "She is truly a specialist while also being a generalist in a small agency, doing what needs to get done so we can do the best we can to serve our neighbors who struggle with homelessness and housing instability."

Mackinnon goes the extra mile for her rep-payee and PSH clients to ensure they continue to succeed in their housing and are stable in their lives. She is also a great support to the other Louison House staff. She sets an example of professionalism, and is a sounding board for colleagues who are tired and frustrated by something that happens with work. She listens, helps them reflect and helps find ways to lessen those stressors that can burden all who work in the human service field.

Mackinnon is known for her humor and her strong sense of duty, which for her means to work hard and do all that can be done, even the mundane tasks such as plunging an apartment's toilet before calling maintenance. She is willing to do the tough tasks with her clients and be supportive of other staff members by doing things that may not be in her job description.

Chunis has individuals reaching for the sky

Since starting as the Autism Supports Program Coordinator almost 4 years ago, Tatiana Chunis has been a force of positive change for the individuals she serves at **Open Sky Community Services**.

When Chunis started the ASD Outreach Program she was overseeing a team of two case managers and a dozen individuals. Since then, she has grown the program into a team of six case managers and almost 60 individuals.

"I work in human services because I want to ... help them achieve their dreams."

A massive part of Chunis' success is her personality; funders have said how much they enjoy working with her, and individuals have expressed time and time again that they love their time with Chunis. Even in the most stressful of times, she will walk into work with a smile on her face ready to tackle the challenges of the day.

"Open Sky Community Services is lucky to have such a dedicated and hard-working person at the helm of such a diverse and growing program," said Zachary Allen, Division Director and Chunis' supervisor. "Her hard work is reflected by all of the successes of the individuals she serves."

Chunis proves to her individuals every day that she is hard working and dedicated, and these traits have led her program to unprecedented growth over the past two years.



Under Tatiana Chunis' guidance, Open Sky Community Services' ASD Outreach Program is a growing and thriving program for individuals on the autism spectrum.

Her hands-on approach has helped her build a rapport with funders and individuals, and it is easy to talk with the individuals served by Chunis and her team and see the positive influence that they have on their lives.

Many of the individuals served in the program have gone to and graduated from college, started jobs, moved into new houses, found new friends, discovered new passions and met their personal goals.

"I work in human services because I want to improve the quality of life for our individuals and help them to achieve their dreams," says Chunis, who has an MBA as well as a degree in psychology.